THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE KHASI

(AUS DEM RELIGIÖSEN LEBEN DER KHASI)

By P. F. Stegmiller

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[501] The Religious Life of the Khasi

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By P. F. Stegmiller, Apostolic Missionary, S.D.S., of Assam (India).

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I. Religion in General

1. Gods, Spirits, Souls.

[173] [771] An explanation about the origin of their religion is not to be expected from the Khasi themselves. Since they do not have a system of writing, nor idols or temples, one must turn entirely to their oral traditions.

773 782 Several Khasis claim that the devil prescribed to their ancestors the method of sacrificing. On the other hand others maintain that in times past a man of rare size and strength came to their country. This man accomplished wonderful things, and commanded their ancestors to sacrifice and at the same time prescribed for them the method of sacrificing. Today the place [408] of his former dwelling on a mountain near Shillong is still pointed out. Since something divine was suspected in that man, he was called u 'lei shillong (the god Shillong).

776 The Khasi believe in a highest being, whom they call u blei nongthaw (1) (the creator god).

[194] 1. Pronounciation of Khasi (method of writing): ei is pronounced as two syllables, e - i, w is pronounced like u, aw is therefore like a - u, sh is pronounced like sch = phonetic š.

Just as the ideas about this person are very hazy, so are the concepts of eternity and the soul.

775 The Khasi are not in agreement among themselves about the conception of what happens to the soul after death. Several say that after death the soul goes up in the air and becomes air and therefore exists no longer. But most of them believe that the soul exists after death and can be happy or unhappy. But this does not depend on personal guilt or sin but only on the conscientious completion of the burial ceremonies.

[631] 776 The country in which the Khasi live is divided into several districts, which were formerly ruled by several kings before the English came. [408] According to the Khasi each district

776 has its own tutelary god on whom they confer the name of the district.

Villages have their own tutelary gods, families have their tutelary gods, even individual people na.. their guardian gods, to whom they occasionally bring a sacrifice.

The Khasi and Synteng also honor gods who are not thought of as tutelary gods but as dispensers of purely material favors, as, for example, u 'lei longspah (god of wealth) and u'lei umtong (the god of water which is used for cooking and drinking). (2)

2. Cf. (below, p. 410) the summarized table of some of the good and evil gods who are honored by the Khasi and the Synteng.

But in general the Khasi believe that the gods or spirits are evil spirits, whom they then designate with the name kauid (devil).

782 They believe that their country is full of such kauid. The chief task of the Khasi is to pacify them. They try by all means to put them in a good mood, and to appease them by sacrifice. It is fear which incites them to their religious activities, not respect or actual reverence. For the Khasi are convinced that it was formerly better. They relate that in the beginning [778] heaven and earth were near together, that people could consort directly with u blei nongthaw the creator god, and that there was still no sin at that time. Now, however, man is sinful and no one offering a sacrifice forgets to pronounce the formulas: nga briu nga la pop (I, man, have sinned). Thus the concept sin is one of the bases of the Khasi religion. The other basis is sacrifice. There is no doubt that sin and sacrifice make up the basic thoughts of the religious views

782 of the Khasi.

Just as the Khasi are unable to explain how man fell into sin, so they also cannot explain why the rooster appears as mediator between god and man. The Khasi tradition relates of the rooster: u khun ka blei ube kit rynderg ba shah rynderg na ka kynta jong nga u briu, i.e. he who, as son of the goddess, gives his life for man, thus expiating sin through sacrifice and reconciling god.

769 775 The Khasi believe in another world and their attention is directed towards the comfort of the spirits of the dead. One of the main tasks is to give them nourishment (ai ban), which must be done, since the welfare of the living depends on the welfare of the dead. For example, if one can no longer get the corpse of the deceased because it is in a foreign country or has been consumed by wild animals, one takes his clothes at the very least and carries out the burial ceremonies with these. For only such spirits, whose burial ceremonies were performed according to usage and custom, can participate in chewing betel nuts in the garden (in the house) of god, whereas the others must wander around on earth [109] or must continue living in insects, birds, and other animals. They do not believe in hell (in the Christian sense). The greatest felicity [27K] for a Khasi is "to chew betel nuts perpetually." Therefore they conceive of heaven as the dwelling (garden or house) of god, in which only betel nuts are chewed: ube ban kwai ha iing u blei (he who chews betel nuts in the house of god).

[776] This cult of spirits, which relates to deceased relatives, is mixed with the ancestor cult. Thus the first great-grandmother of each sib (jaid) becomes a goddess (ka jaubei) and the first great-grandfather of the sib a god (u thaulang).

781 Finally other earthly things are deified,
782 and the cult of spirits increases in objects.
782 If there is an unusually formed mountain anywhere, sacrifices are brought to it, since a kuuid lives there. And the spirit who inhabits the mountain is soon combined with the mountain itself, and then the mountain is worshipped and sacrifices are brought to it. The same thing happens with rivers. How easily a river god can be insulted and made angry by fishing or by crossing over to the other bank! Therefore the first thing to do is to bring the river god a sacrifice. The Khasi never make a picture, neither of stone nor of wood, which is supposed to represent their gods, but nevertheless they revere many powers of nature and phenomena of nature, and it is difficult to differentiate the extent to which the mountain or river is worshipped and the extent to which sacrifice is made to the spirit of the mountain or the river.

In everything that one calls bad luck or misfortune the Khasi see the work of evil spirits: in the bad harvest, in flood, in sickness. The spirits live in the primeval forest, in the steep inaccessible cliffs, in the rushing river, in the green tree. They come through the air in all weather. They give the tiger strength, the snake poison, the thicket fever, and they lurk in cholera for their victim.

782 These are the reasons for the many sacrifices and sacrificial customs of the Khasi all of which are only to bring about the reconciliation of the angered spirits. Prayers also occur during individual sacrificial scenes which one can conceive of as prayers of thanks or of praise, but these are exceptions.

The sacrifices are performed either by sacrificial priests (lyngdoh) or by old men who have experience. First one seeks out the spirit who

782 must be appeased by throwing eggs. If the desired
[781] effect does not occur after the sacrifice has been offered, further information is sought by observing intestines (sacrifice of rooster), and the sacrifice is offered again. At least that is what is done for sickness. The other sacrifices will be described in more detail later.

771 114 The religion of the Khasi is one that arises from fear of misfortune and harm, and is active in the worship of (evil) spirits through sacrifice. This definition of mine corresponds essentially with the definitions of Bivar, (3) who

[113] 3. Bivar, Administration Report on the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District of 1876.

says: "The Khasi religion may be briefly defined as a form to cure illnesses and to ward off misfortune, by finding out [210] the name of the devil who is the original cause of the evil and to appease him by sacrifices which are necessary," and Gurdon (4) "calls the Khasi religion a cult

[113] 4. Gurdon, The Khasi (London, 1907) p. 105.

of spirits, i.e., actually rather a reconciliation of spirits, good as well as bad, by sacrifices, which are offered occasionally, especially in times of distress."

Table of Summary

776 of several gods (good and evil) who are revered by the Khasi and the Synteng.

1. Good Gods:

u blei nongthaw, the creator god,
u 'lei longspah, the (good) god of wealth,

776 u 'lei umtong, the god of water that is used for cooking and drinking,
u 'lei shillong, the god who commanded sacrifice,
u sim shillong ramjah, the highest god of the Synteng,
ka maidolong, the highest goddess of the Synteng,
u sim synriang, the son of the above who was born in a wonderful, supernatural way,
ka ram-ew, the goddess of earth,
ka puron, one of the first feminine deities of the Khasi, who is supposed to represent the first maternal ancestor,
u phan suid iap, one of the ancestor spirits who is invoked for blessing of the living and the dead,
u phan long siem, the household god of a king,
ka longkha, the goddess of marriage,
ka 'leikhuri, the household goddess of a certain sib of the Khasi,
u 'suid sia, the spirit of the first maternal great-uncle of a sib,
ka blei long-s'iem, the goddess who makes kings kings,
ka s'iem-synshar, the goddess who rules the world,
u biskurom, the god who teaches the playing of flutes and of other musical instruments,
ka blei-jew-lei-hat, the goddess of the market places,
u 'lei pyrthat, the god of thunder,
ka 'lei aitan, the goddess of the river,
ka 'lei iing, the household goddess,
ka ksaw ka jirngam, the goddess who brings luck, especially in the hunt,
u rynkew shnong, the tutelary god of a village,
u basa shnong, the tutelary god of a village,
u phan u kyrpad, the tutelary god of a village,
ka longkur, the tutelary goddess of a sib,

77 ka 'lei-sad 'lei-sunom, the tutelary goddess of a royal family,
ka 'leikhyrdop 'leikharai, the goddess who guards the entrance to the village in time of war,
ka 'lei-muluk, the goddess who guards the state or village,
ka sad, the goddess who guards the royal families,
ka ram-shandi, the goddess who inspires the people in time of war.

[117] 2. Evil Gods

u siem thylliew, the god of smallpox,
ka duba, the fever demoness in and around Theriagat,
ka rih, the demoness of malaria fever,
ka khlam, the demoness of cholera,
ka tyrut, the demoness who causes violent death,
u sahet, a devil to whom one offers sacrifices only inside a house,
ka byrdaw, the demoness who causes attacks of cramps,
u kyrtep, the devil who causes blindness,
u lasamdoh, the devil who causes swelling of the joints and hoarseness,
u jingbih-u lasam, the devil who causes sickness of the mouth and of the teeth,
ka tihar, the demoness who causes severe colic,
ka shwar, the demoness who causes convulsive cramps,
ka shuar, the demoness of wealth,
u thynrai, the devil who always makes illnesses worse,
ka shur, the demoness of wealth (only among the Khasi),
ka taro, the demoness of wealth (only among the Synteng),
u 'suid-um, the devil of water who attacks the women and causes sterility and miscarriage,

776 u tynjang, the lame devil who lives in the thicket and tickles people to death,
ka ron, the worst of all the demonesses (only among the Synteng),
u 'suid-lam-iap, the executor of the commands of god, who has to fetch the souls into the other world,
u thlen, the devil of wealth and comfort who can only be worshipped by human sacrifice,
ka smar, a demoness who brings violent death,
ka syrti, the demoness who scratches and cuts, saws, and files (by pain in the intestines),
ka jumai, the demoness of earthquakes,
ka niangriang, the demoness who causes children's illnesses (especially in the navel),
u 'suid briew or u 'suid ngor, the devil who attacks people in the early morning and causes stitches in the side or hoarseness,
u 'suid-kynta-saran, the devil who makes headaches,
u synkai bamon, an evil spirit,
ka ramshandi, a demoness.

c

3. Revered Powers of Nature:

778 The Punatit River, to whom the kings of Mowgetein, Dangrin, and Nobosohpoh offer sacrifices.
the Khai-mara River among the Lur,
the Kopili River among the Synteng,
the Myntang River among the Synteng,
the Shillong Peak (mountain near Shillong),
the Rableng Mountain near Shillong,
the Kyllong Cliffs,
the Symper Mountain,
the mountain Pyddieng blei lyngdoh near Shangpung (Jaintia).

[112]

779 754 2. Methods of Warding Off Evil Spirits

The Khasi do not practise magic in the

757 strictest sense of the word. It is rather an
759 instinctive activity, which is influenced by superstition to which they have succumbed. In their opinion all misfortune and bad luck are caused by evil spirits. The chief purpose of
762 their sacrifices is to propitiate them (khein ban khai). But they well know that it is possible to cause others harm with the help of the devil. Their magic consists of this and in warding off harm. The magic is not accomplished by special magicians who make a profession of it; but whoever believes he is able to harm others with the help of the devil tries it. In the same way, those who have to ward off harm of any kind hope to be able to accomplish this with the help of the devil.

753 If anyone has a throat ailment, whether it
755 is a tumor or only hoarseness, they believe that
756 it occurs through the influence of the devil u lasamboh. Therefore a rooster or a pig is sacrificed in the courtyard of the person concerned. The blood of the sacrificed animal is given to the sick person to drink so that he may recover.

They do similar things when a person has a toothache or is sick with some kind of mouth ailment. This sickness is ascribed to the devil u jingbih.

753 If a child is born blind they believe that
756 adultery on the part of the father is the cause. This adultery is punished in the child by the devil u kyrdep.

The demoness ka byrdaw causes attacks of cramps, and convulsive cramps are the work of the feared demoness ka shwar.

Existent ailments are made definitely worse by the devil u thyrnrei.

Whoever goes into the forest and hears the call: kăw-hoit, kăw-hoit, should hurry away because the devil u 'suid-tynjang lives there and

7% is calling. He is, however, lame; but whoever
[754] answers the call or screams is lost, since he will be seized by the 'suid tynjang and tickled to death.

[763] If one wishes to protect oneself from a violent death, one must propitiate the demoness ka tyrut by sacrifice, because she is the original cause of this method of dying. The Khasi have a great respect for violent death as it increases the difficulties of the prescribed ceremonies of burial, even making them impossible, which would in turn deny the spirit of the departed one peace in eternity.

[775] They also live in fear of the devil u 'suid-lam-iap (the messenger of god, i.e., the executor of his commands). He leads the souls of people away into another kingdom. He is supposed to be horrible; of gigantic size, he walks around with long trailing hair seeking his victim. His teeth are as large as a ka wait (a hatchet or an axe).

[742] [41] The women are especially afraid of a devil whom they call u 'suid-um (the water devil). He has the power of attacking women and causing sterility in them, and if they are pregnant causing a miscarriage.

7% The demoness ka khlam brings cholera and the
753 demoness ka tihar brings severe colic.

They believe that they get malaria through the influence of the demoness ka rih, while in the region of Theriaghat the fever is ascribed to the demoness ka duba.

Smallpox, which is otherwise feared everywhere, is considered by the Khasi to be evidence of the favor of the god u siem niang thylliew. If there is someone in one of the huts sick with smallpox, the sick person is not only not avoided, but even healthy children are brought there, so that they may receive the "kiss of the god," i.e., that [illegible] get smallpox.

000 that they may also get smallpox.

776 Every Khasi is desirous of wealth. There-
556 fore they sacrifice to the demoness of wealth, ka shur, whom they fear just as much as the Synteng fear the demoness ka taro, who likewise only allows the desired wealth to come to those who revere her.

776 But all evil taken together can be caused
782 by the demoness ka ron. She is the worst of all devils in the opinion of the Synteng. The Khasi sacrifice only to her and the devil u mahet inside the hut, and not as is otherwise customary out of doors (in the courtyard of the hut).

But the Khasi have the greatest fear of the
[?25] devil u thlen. He can be kept in the house by people in the form of a snake. Since he is only propitiated by human blood, it is necessary to find human sacrifices (ka 'langthoklieh). One cuts off the toenails and fingernails of the victims and these are brought with the blood of the murdered one during the night in a closed house as a sacrifice to the devil with prayers and exhortations. To get these human sacrifices, the thlen possessor must look for them with cunning or violence. Usually hired murderers are sent out, to whom one previously hands a quite special liquor 'iad-tang-snem (literally: lasts for a year). The Khasi believe that anyone who drinks this liquor is so influenced (enchanted) that he will really carry out the planned murder. When these murderers (nong-shoh-noh) are on their way or waiting in ambush to catch their victim for the thlen, they may not use any iron, because the thlen near the cave of Pomdalai near Cherrapunji was killed by a brave man named u suidnoh, when the thlen appeared there in the form of an enormous snake in order to swallow up people and animals. The victim is struck down with a stick which usually has a silver knob.

776 782 Then the wings of his nose are cut with a shear, or pincer of silver and the blood is drained off. In the same way the nails on the hands and feet are cut off with silver shears. Finally the dead body is thrown into an abyss. (5)

[113] 5. For further details about "Human Sacrifice Among the Khasi", see Dr. P. C. Becker, Salvatorianische Mitteilungen [Salvatorian Communications], 1909, No. 5, pp. 75 ff.

754 782 [114] Since on the one hand many Khasi are busy trying to kill others with the help of the devil or to make them sick (ai-ksuid), and on the other hand the evil spirits also harm men without being called upon, an enormous fear is thus the fruit of this superstition. From this fear comes the desire to make oneself free from the influence of evil spirits (lait-ksuid) or to modify this influence by sacrifices (khad) or at least to propitiate the devil completely (khein-ban khai).

796 [722] Therefore the Synteng annually hold a large feast for driving away cholera (ka behdiengkhlam). The offered sacrifices have the purpose or propitiating the feared demoness ka khlam but at the same time they also have the purpose of making the participants in the sacrifice safe against cholera (to enchant them). Gurdon (6)

6. Gurdon, The Khasis.

describes this feast as follows: "In the month of June when the river is full of water, on a certain day the men go in the morning in front of the huts and strike the roofs of the huts with sticks. At the same time they call on the demoness ka khlam continuously and challenge her to leave

796 the house concerned. Then they go slowly down to the river. Large poles, which were set out the day before, are now placed on the river. The people jump onto the poles and try to break them. If this happens a general great shout of joy sounds forth. If all the poles are broken, they fetch a particularly strong pole, actually a beam, and place it over the river. The people now divide up into two halves, and a battle begins for the possession of this beam. But the fight is a friendly one and even though there are many blows and even wounds, the people do not engage in a serious fight, even though they battle and struggle for the possession of the beam so hard that many lose all their clothes. The side which has the luck of winning possession of the beam will be healthy (free of cholera) and well for the coming year according to the belief of the people.

797 The use of charcoal also borders on magic. Thus P.V. Kartte, Apostolic Missionary, S.D.S. writes: (7) If a mother has a long journey to

[113] 7. Kartte, Die Religion der heidnischen Khasi [The Religion of the Heathen Khasi], Apostelkalender, 1895. [Apostle Calendar]

make, she makes a black mark with charcoal on the forehead of her child to protect it from any harm. Then she takes a longish piece of wood, splits it at one end into four parts, and puts the piece of charcoal in between. The mother carries this in her hand on the journey.

821 The same missionary also reports the doings of the Khasi during an eclipse of the moon: "If there is an eclipse of the moon, the Khasi believe that a frog is with the moon and is eating it up. The Khasi like the moon very much, and in order to prevent the frog from eating up the

821 moon they try to frighten the frog with noise and to drive him away. A few days ago we experienced a sample of it. In all the villages the Khasi beat drums and screamed at the same time. It was a purely hellish spectacle." (8)

8. Loc. cit., p. 62.

[415] The Khasi also have no explanation for thunderstorms. They believe, therefore, that the ksuid (devils) cause them. Especially disturbing to them is thunder, which can be extremely violent in a tropical storm. When lightning strikes [712] anywhere, they sacrifice to the ksuid u pyrthat a fat pig, the blood of which is smeared on the altar in order to propitiate him and to prevent the lightning from striking again.

712 When the Khasi sacrifice to protect themselves from harm or to heal themselves from illnesses, they murmur formulas or prayers during the sacrifice. They implore the invisible powers at the same time and thus support the offered sacrifice. They call this murmuring tim-knia (swearing-sacrificing). It is also reported thus of the sacrifices in Nongkrem: (9) "Each person places

[1137] 9. P. Dr. C. Becker, Die Nongkrem-Puja in den Khasibergen (Assam) /The Nongkrem Puja in the Khasi Mountains (Assam)/, Anthropos, IV (1909), p. 898.

the little bottle of liquor on the little pile of mud in front of him. This represents the altar. Then they take pepper leaves and oak leaves and place them in front of the altar in a certain way next to and on top of each other; pieces of betel nut are placed on top and the whole is sprinkled with rice, kpu meal and rynsi meal, while short prayers are murmured."

000 while short prayers are murmured." To ward off
789 the influence of evil spirits, the Khasi use all kinds of magic means. They prepare a kind of lattice work from split igrâ (thin bamboo), which they fasten side by side evenly with a binding object (u thri), with the inside towards the front, and they hang it up on forked branches in the forest. The number of these little sticks is always uneven, 13 or 15 more or less. In the middle of the little sticks a colorful line (blue or red) is drawn (Fig. 1). Such lattice work or bamboo flags are often placed several together in some place in the forest. [Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, spirit sticks and spirit lattices.]

In addition to these lattice works or flags they also make spirit sticks or spirit posts which they also place in the thickets and which have the same purpose of driving off the spirits or of making them harmless. [416] Such sticks are cut from wood and are either quite simple square sticks with a crooked, added point (Fig. 5) or they are simple square sticks with a triple point (Fig. 2) all cut from one piece. These sticks are not painted. In addition to these simple spirit sticks the Khasi also make beautiful painted sticks. Fig. 3 shows a square stick which has a triple square decoration in blue and red. Its point is not notched, but cut slanted or crooked. Fig. 4 shows another kind. It is a six-sided wooden stick which has a hat or head (of one piece with the stick), the point of which is notched or set off. This spirit stick has circular decorations of red and blue interrupted by straight, horizontal lines. Such sticks also occur in an eight-sided form.

One often finds several of such spirit sticks or flags placed beside each other in a little place in the woods or thickets. [Illustration: Magic lattices against the forest devil].

2:Stegmiller-17 M-4,5(no date) 1921 AR7 Khasi AR7

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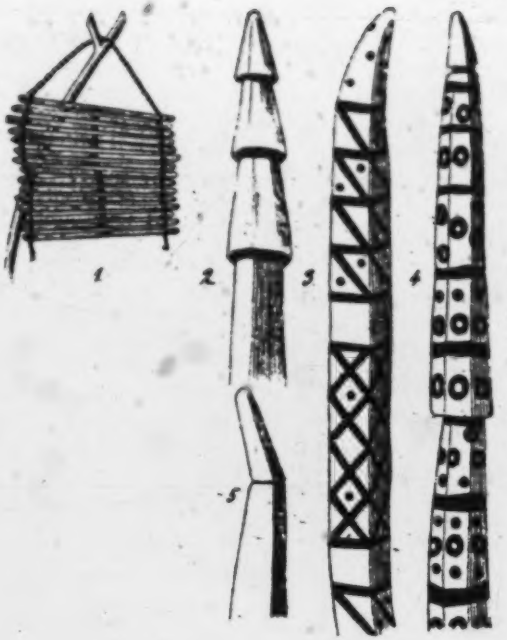

[415] Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,

Spirit sticks and spirit lattices.

2:Stegmiller-18 (no date)1921 AR7 Khasi AR7

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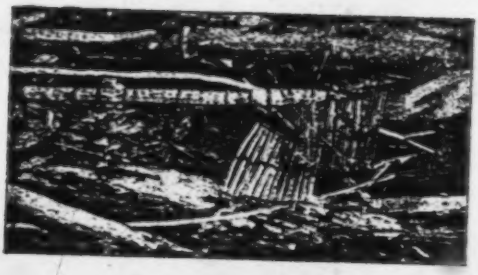

[416]

Magic lattices against the forest devil.

782 The Khasi also erect little platforms with little houses from long bamboo sticks in which food is served to the spirits of the woods and fields (to serve [siang-] actually means spread out, as one spreads out a carpet or as one spreads out leaves for serving rice on).

[789] But not only through making sacrifices do the Khasi try to propitiate the devils and thereby make them harmless. They even try it with violence. Thus, as mentioned above, they drive the cholera demoness out of the house with sticks. Also during a cremation they shoot three arrows to ward off evil spirits.

There are many ways of warding off evil spirits; or, for acquiring their help words, wishes, or curses are used, as, for example, during a match of arrow shooting, the watchers who stand by the target try to keep the arrows of the opponents from hitting the target by calling on some god (ksuid) and the more they shriek, the sooner they believe they will attain their purpose. They wish to influence the arrows of the opponents.

3. Taboos (sang)

784 782 The sang or taboos of the Khasi also belong to superstition. Sang means the same as "sacrilegiously or most strictly forbidden." This sang can be traced back to totemistic views. Sang can be something for a single person, for a house (iing) or a family, for a sib and a whole race (jaid). If a man or a woman whose spouse has died remarries, the sang is transferred to the relatives of the deceased man or woman. This "inheritance" of the sang is different according to the sib. By accepting the sang the inheritors must pay 11 of a [417] kaŵ or 7 1/2 of a kaŵ or 5 1/2 of a kaŵ. By kaŵ the number 1280 is actually understood. But it means, however, that

[587 428]

784 the heir must pay 11 or 7 1/2 or 5 1/2 percent
782 of their wealth, in order to be able to pay for the great festivities at the cremation and the later disposal of the ashes. First of all various sacrificial gifts are bought with the money. When one has all the sacrificial gifts together, one erects three hewn stones in the manner of mau-bynna (urn stones) on any road. These stones are called "adulterer stones" /Ehebrechersteine/ (mau-klim). Then one catches a pig and curses it in the following way: (10)

[113]

10. This and the following Khasi texts are taken from the kitab jingphawar by U. Rabon Singh (Shillong, 1902); I am indebted to the very worthy P.C. Bonheim, Apostolic Missionary, S.D.S. of Cherrapunji, who was most willing to place his many years of experience at my disposal for the translation into German.

Hei sngewkyndiang ho kane nga iathuhkhana ba me ba la ioh ka sang na ka tnga ka jong me yn leh kumno kynrad wei la pom ka bneng ka khyndew, ka tyrut ka smer sngew la khuid ka sang ka ma, ka klim ka ngat yn long sa ka rong sa ka taw, sa ka sngewbha ka sngewmiat mo! Hei une sa u dykhot u lamjew ka iad bang ka iad thiang mo!

So listen carefully to this that I am saying, thou who hast inherited the sang from thy wife; What else should we do, lord; after heaven and earth, the Tyrut and the Smer (demonesses) slay him, we are freed; the sang is made holy, the feared sang, adultery and other sins. Then it can be that the bones are transferred and peace and joy will come to us, mo! (is it

784 not so!) See here the piece u dykhot (11) and

11. A piece of sacrificial meat.

the sour things u lamjew (12) (a strong and

12. Herbs, roots.

sweet liquor) no! (is it not so!)

[574] All relatives and acquaintances, friends and neighbors are invited to this sacrificial feast.[1] There is a big festive meal, chiefly of meat and bacon. But before the eating begins, the reng (horn) and ngap (fork) which were laid on the "adulterer stone" before the cursing of the pig are removed. At this sacrifice all the money collected before (11 or 7 1/2 or 5 1/2 of a kâw) must be completely used up, as it is forbidden to preserve any of it in house so that it will not get mixed up with the daily wage or one's earnings.

[587] The remarriage must naturally occur in another sib (jaid) if the sang is to be inherited; because otherwise the sang would remain in the family.

784 Most of the sang that occur, different according to the families or the sibs, are the following: (13)

13. Gurdon, The Khasis, p. 5.

[418] 1. Building a house with stone walls on all four sides.
2. The use of iron nails in building a house.
3. The use of more than one kind of wood in building a hearth.
4. The use of resinous wood in building a house.
5. Felling wood in a holy forest (except

1 [cf. cat. 116, pp. 19-21 -- Analyst]

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for a cremation). See table I, picture 2, "The heathen Khasi village Raliang with a "holy wood" (law kyntang) in the background."

6. Giving or taking anything at all with the left hand.
7. Stepping over the corpse of another person.
8. Killing an animal or bird without having previously strewn rice on its head.
9. Using the milk of the cow or the goat.
10. Completing all kinds of started sewing or basket weaving for pregnant women.
11. Pregnant women are not allowed to accompany any funeral procession.
12. The husband of a pregnant woman is forbidden to roof the house (straw roof) or to make a handle for a hatchet or an axe (ka wait - ka da).
13. Speaking with anyone at all as long as the threshing of the rice lasts, unless it is with the co-workers of the man or of the woman.
14. Variously the use of pork, dried fish, melons, lemons, etc. is forbidden.

784 Violating the sang is punished by the
68?deity. Thus several Khasi explained after the
342great earthquake of June 12, 1897: "Because you built your houses of stone and fastened the planks with nails, it has so happened that everything has tumbled down, because god does not wish stone and despises nails. Formerly we too built only with wood and bamboo and used bast for making things fast and for binding, but today people have become proud and have built with stone. That is why this has happened; god

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342 hates stone; he does not wish any lime." (14)

14. P.A. Münzloher, S.D.S. Die apostolische Präfektur Assam /The Apostolic Prefecture of Assam/ (Rome, 1899), p. 83.

4. Egg Throwing (shat-pylleng)

787 The most common of all the oracles of the
782 Khasi is egg throwing (shat-pylleng). A great deal has already been written about it. (15)

[113]

15. P. Dr. C. Becker, Das Eierwerfen der Khasi /Egg Throwing Among the Khasi/ Anthropos XII-XIII (1917-1918), pp. 494-496.

I will only add here the prayer of the sacrificer u nongshat-pylleng. It is not an actual prayer, at least the nongshat-pylleng is not bound to any formula. The sacrificer speaks approximately thus:

Ko lengsam khun ka blei, ko banang ko batip ko ba lah ko baiai, nga pynthiah nga pyndem halor ka diengshat ka diengkhein, ka duwan ka dupat, a kynrad ngan kylli ngan

O thou egg of the oracle, thou daughter of the goddess, thou whom thou knowest and art aware of (art able to) thou remainest thou (stayest); I put thee down here on the board (16)

16. Cf. Table II, Picture 1. /419/

togkit katne ba long shitom ka lanot ka shoh ka ther ka shit ka syang ka pisa ka lynga ia ka met u

on the oracular wood, on the altar, o mistress, I question and ponder (would like to question,

787 Donsing hato nangno ka
782 daw ba long katne don
hi na kpoh la iing mo?
Kaba wan thaw katne?

wish to question), for great are the troubles and the afflictions, the oppressions and the cares, the heat and the fire (of the fever), the disquietude and the depression of N.N. What is the reason that he is so badly off? Does the cause lie in the family itself perhaps (na khpoh, i.e., in the stomach, in the insides)? Has that perhaps done all this?

Lada don ka jot
ka rem ka bijar ka
buhkhoh ha ka blei
ka Iawbei, ha u phan u
kyrpad ngan sa jied
ngan sa pynshai ia ka
khmat ka long jot ka
long rem ka bijar ka
buhkhoh, don?

If perhaps a sin, a guilt, a vexation, or any annoyance exists for the goddess Jaubei or Phan u kyrpad, so will I ponder and illuminate the eye (of understanding) the corruption and the guilt, the annoyance and the vexation, which, may it be?

Jem ka mon bin
kynrong ka diang joit
buh ka jingkem arsnep
slait, da weng ka lar
ka sap ka buhsang ka
tharai ong em me ym don
na kpoh la iing ka ban

My will is soft as jelly and very tiny. Cross the left over the right quickly! Line up the two egg shells (slait, i.e., without any room in

787 wan thaw kum kata, khat
782 ei na wei du kaba wan
shoh ther katne.

between), take away the white (egg white), the sacrilegious thing, (not permitted thing) and the uncertain thing! Say: no! thou! It does not come from the family that which has caused all this. Therefore it comes from outside (from somewhere else), that which strikes him and rattles down so on him.

Lar ha ka dong ngang, kiew ha ka dong roit, noh ka diang khyllon ka diang da buh lengsam shiliang kadiang!

May the white come to the outermost corner and may it climb into the corner, down with the left! May the left close together (may the left sink powerlessly together). Place the oracle over to the left, to the half!

Mynno nga bynthiew mynno nga kyrkhah mynno nga sin mynno nga rngop nga pynsum dewlieh dewtem dewsni dewsnah dewraij dewkynton ba ngan iit ia ka liem ia ka dem ka pyllup ka lyndang, mo.

When have I then spit out? When have I cleared my throat of the thick phlegm? When have I [420] given a nickname? When have I washed and bathed the white earth (clay, loam), white loam, yellow loam, sticky loam, heaped up loam? So that I may

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recognize that which lies towards the top and towards the bottom, that which lies on the back and on the stomach, is it not so?

Mynno nga rah
mynno nga rong kum
ka khlieng ka tyngab,
ka ims ka doh.

When have I carried anything away, When have I dragged something off, such as the hawk or the raven or any kind of bird or meat?

Hu mo 'lengsam!

Hurrah! is it not so, thou egg of the oracle!

5. The Sacrifice of the Rooster (jingknia syiar)

Just as by egg throwing so by the sacrifice of the rooster the Khasi wish to find out the reasons that are causing illness or some other misfortune. This sacrifice of a rooster is almost as common as throwing eggs. It is especially performed when a serious case must be settled. Since the rooster is more expensive than an egg, they expect to get the desired results more readily through the sacrifice of the rooster. In general the rite is the same as described in the Nongkrem-Puja in the Khasi mountains. (17) An example of the "invocations"

17.P. Dr. C. Becker, Anthropos, IV (1909), p. 899.

follows here, which the sacrificer pronounces with the following words:

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782 Te ko rangiarkhad, ko khun ka blei, ko rangkynjih ko rangkyn jai, ko rangkynih ko rangphawar ko ba ioh ka hukum ka kular na myndang long ka pyrthei, shai ka pyrthei na khmat ka blei ktien ka blei, te ha sngew nga kylli nga tohkit ha shat ha ka khan, nangno ka daw ba wan shoh wan ther katne ia ka met u Donsing?

And now, thou sacrificial rooster, thou son of the goddess, thou hopper and jumper, thou crower, thou wise-speaker (who understands how to speak in figures of speech), thou who hast received the law and the promise from the beginning of the world, Bright is the world from the face of the goddess, from the word of the goddess! So listen now, I ask, I ponder, I cast oracles, I question oracles: whence is the reason (what is the reason), that strikes N. N. and rattles down so on his body?

Ong phi ka blei manga, ka shoh te manga ka ther te manga ka sympat ka kawiat te manga, te nga shang darum-darum daneng-daneng nga kylli nangno ka long-jot ka long-rem, nangno ka bijar ka buhkhoh phi ka blei!

Say, o goddess: It is I who strikes him, it is I who rattles down on him, and I who scourges /421/ and lashes him. And I go back and forth and up and down and ask, whence comes then the destruction, the incrimination, whence then the vexation and annoyance, o thou goddess!

787
782 Ong phi ka blei,
ko khun ka lamler
mynkato me ka sngi
me iapan ia ka dur ka
long briew ka long iing
na khmat nga ka blei
ka laubei nga ong!

So say, o goddess,
thou daughter of lies,
at that time, is it
not so, (18) on that

18. The following words are, as it were, as if the sacrificial rooster were putting them in the mouth of the goddess and were contradicting the oracle.

Khie kynmaw
sieh ka jutang na kata
ka lynti, ynda me ieng
ka nguh ka dem u ak-
hot u lamjew u kpu u
rynsi ia ka jong ka
longspah kat ia katei
ka dur ka long briew
ba me la sieh ka jutang
mynkato ka sngi.

day thou hast de-
manded the picture of
the man, the value of
the family before my
face, before me, the
goddess, before me the
Jaubei, so I say!
Stand up and re-
call! Draw forth
the promise from that
way! And when thou
standest there and
bowest down and show-
est reverence, then
the thanks and the
reverence, then the
piece and the sour
thing, then the bread
and the cake, to
thine own well-being
and wealth, as to
that picture of the
coming into existence
of man which thou hast
produced through the

787
782 Mem don ka iathu-
hkhana ha khmat nga
ka blei me tep me
lynde pynban, nangta
jot nga ka blei ka
laubei!

Im u syiar u shan
ye nangta im ka sang
ka ma te nangta, im
ka tyrut ka smer te
nangta, ioh ka shitom
ka lanot u bynriew
te na kata ku lynti.

Te ko blei trai
kynrad wei nga la lap
ia kata ka knia ka
lynti ka long-jot ka
long-rem ka jong phi
te mynta ngan da ieng
ka kynmaw ka kyndit
namar kata ka lynti
kat haba shong ka
nguh ka dem u kpu u
rynsi u klonh u
ksaw, la suk la jemnud
phi ka olei ka law-
bei na kata ka lynti.

promise on that day.

Hast t.ou no tale of this before my, the goddess! before my face! Thou buryest, thou concealest it rather, and therefore the disaster, say I, the goddess, the Jaubei!

Long live the rooster, the support, and further, long live the taboo and the threat, and again long live the Tyrut and the Smer and then: man experiences suffering and sorrow, on every way thither (from birth).

Thou, however, o god and master, since I have now come along thy ground, the way of destruction, of guilt, so I raise myself up. The memory, the perplexity because of that way, wherever I may dwell, shall be the thanks, the reverence [420], the bread and the cake, the gourd and the gourd bottle; peaceful and well-intentioned art thou, o goddess Jaubei, on that path.

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782 Yn sa ioh ka khiah ka nang, ieng rangbah u bynriew joit suk me u blei lyngngai weng ka thoah ka tar ka kjab ka star.

We receive the sublime and the possible. Quickly rise up, man! Well satisfied be thou, o god! Take away the faults, the stains, the band and the sling.

Ong ym pat shong ka dur da kumta khadei dang kumwei du, kiew da ka thoh da ka tar da ka brain da ka briah da ka kjab da ka star, katta mo blei tray kynrad, kuri-ei nga pynsum nga pynsleh nga pyntang nga pynpung ha ka umthwei umlyngiam, ban kiew ka syrti ka jumai ban um ka ryndang ha khmat ka duwan ka dupat ban nang ka korbar ka sorbar mo?

Say: the picture does not yet appear thus, rather different, is it not so! Raise thyself from the great stains and from the great faults and from all the little stains and spots, from sling and band and then, is it not so, o god and master, it is in vain! I wash and bathe and make pipes of water and scooped-out wells in the eddy and in the depths, so that ka syrtieh (19)

[776] 19. Ka syrtieh is a demoness, who cuts and scratches and files and saws, i.e., through inner pains.

and ka Jumai (20) may

[776] 20. Ka jumai is the demoness of earthquakes.

arise, so that the throat may dissolve (bleed to death) before the visage of the

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Snam syiar, hei nga dkhat sohpet shynnai ban na.g ka korbar ka sorbar, kane de ka deng de ka kup ka ryndia ka muka ka iarong ka muna ho, jei dong tam dong lait ban lait ka jot ka rem mo?

altar, so that the counsel be good, is it not so?

Thou blood of the rooster, hurrah! Look, I tear out its navel, the intestines, so that the counsel be good. This here is the jewelry, this the garment, this the silk, this the purse and the net, is it not so? Look, here is the tube for gathering, here the tube for escaping from destruction and guilt is it not so?

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6. Discovering the Spirits that Need Appeasing (kheinksuid).

Khein ksuid means the seeking for or the discovering of the insult to the goddess which sells (die) man through suffering to the pain-causer (ksuid). The demon cannot harm man if the goddess does not stand for it and allow it. The guilt of man plays no part in this (in and of itself). The Khasi say that in their religion there is only one goddess, the "Giver of Orders" (ka nonghukum). She commands that a phan u kyrpad [423] should be, that a suid-nia of Jaubei should be (suid-nia is the spirit of the first maternal uncle of the sib, in this case he is supposed to be the "intercessor" with the Jaubei). Or she herself choses a means, that is supposed to be "god." for example, as she herself becomes the goddess of wealth or the goddess of the curse. This goddess gives the command for the sacrifices: That the piece (u dykhot) and the

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782 sour thing (u lamjew) be sacrificed! If this goddess is insulted by any kind of error, then she must be propitiated again, and this is done by the sacrifice of a goat, of a pig, or through the sacrifice of the gourd and the gourd bottle, or (for the very poor) through the sacrifice of water which one shakes out on a brass plate (ka pliang) or on a woven plate (ka pdung). It is she also who commands that one drive away the demon or the demoness, especially the demon who helps day and night (uba rap synnia rap sngi), by a sacrifice of money, a hundred or a ten, which must be brought to him.

Everything is at her commands: thus the sacrifice of food which is brought the spirits (ai bam ia ki suidiap), the sacrifice of thanks which is brought the Thaulang (kaba nguh thawlang), the auguries (kaba tap ryngiew tap rywiang) or the naming of children (tap lubri tap hyrteng). For example, if a mountain devil or a river devil is supposed to be driven away, she gives the command to ask the oracle of the house first and not to make a noise. Then, however, one should take a freely chosen sacrifice, such as doves, chickens, pigs, or goats and strew them with rice and then let them run off free. Anyone who catches them may keep them.

[784] In this religion there is also something very painful and extremely difficult, namely finding out the guilt of one long since dead in order to atone for it again through sacrifice. For sometimes nothing can be found that is the reason or cause of sickness or trouble and therefore it must be the error of an ancestor that is not yet expiated. But this kind of investigation of devils is very difficult, since one cannot easily discover the connection. An experienced and worthy sacrifice who...

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782 understands how to interpret the signs of the goddess must take this case in hand.

782 If the goddess Jaubei was insulted by an offense, a goat must be sacrificed to her. This goat must be beautiful, it must be white, it must be full-grown, but still virginal. The sacrifice is brought into the front courtyard. On the altar, which is usually prepared of loam or earth, (21) the sacrificial gifts are

21. By "altar" (ka duwan) the Khasi means everything on which he offers his sacrifices, whether it be a stone, or a banana leaf, a heap of loam, or an altar made of earth.

now spread out: bread(kpu), cake (rynsi), gourds (u klong), young oak shoots (u sning ka laliar), uncooked rice (u khaw) and fermented rice water (ka sapoh). Now the goat's head is cut off with one blow. The dead animal is cut up and the separate pieces needed for the sacrifice are placed in readiness. There are various ways of sacrificing. Some take five such pieces, others seven, and again others take nine pieces. But what is taken for the sacrifice, must [424] come from the inside of the animal (napoh krem ka kypoh, i.e., from the stomach cavity). Those who use five pieces take something from the liver, something from the heart, something from the lung, something from the kidneys, and something from the loin (of meat, the part that runs along the spinal marrow).

Those who use seven parts for the sacrifice take the above mentioned parts and in addition some of the spleen and some of the small intestine.

782 But those who use nine parts take in addition to those parts mentioned above two parts of the large intestine and of the small intestine and two parts of the appendix.

It is very hard to describe the sacrificial customs of the Khasi, i.e., to describe them quite exactly, as it is made differently in many cases. And even in the same case, for example for the same sickness or the same trouble, the sacrifices are made differently. One can readily see that in the fact that some use five parts of the sacrificed animal, some even seven parts and others again nine parts. Similar differences occur all along the line. For all cases the "piece" (dykhot) and the "sour thing" (lamjew), as well as "liquor" (iad) are sacrificed.

The method of the sacrifice depends on the relatives, that is on what the custom of [428] the sib is. The youngest daughter is the heiress of the wealth, but she is also the one who is responsible for the sacrificial rites of the sib. It is her duty to preserve the sacrificial rite which was always customary in the family (ha iing). The sacrificer (u synniang) conducts himself according to her instructions. Often many sacrificers are needed, for example at a time of plague or general trouble. Since there are now not too many sacrificers who understand the matter well, many desired sacrifices are omitted. Because of that, the Khasi believe that the rooster (u siar u shan) lives again, because of that the u longduh u longsam (evil spirit) lives again, because of that the Tyrut and the Smer live again, i.e., the evil demonic influences of these spirits become influential again through the neglect of the sacrifices.

782 Often the head of a sib (u knie u kypa) delays the sacrifice for a decade, often for a lifetime. From this comes the difficulty for the descendants of being able to sacrifice according to the ways of the sib, since the memory of their own sacrificial rites becomes lost by the years long pauses in the sacrifices. It is difficult to revive (kynroi) the method of sacrificing. Or the old people die off (or become Christians) and so the young people no longer learn which formulas they have, which invocations were customary, which parts (of the slain animal) they should take. The relationship with the ancestors becomes lost and as a rule they can no longer remember everything.

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When matters have progressed this far, then the Jaubei sees to it that sacrificing is not neglected by permitting the members of her sib to be plagued by the devils. Especially, she permits the devils of the mountains, the rivers, the water, and the air to make their harmful influences effective. Since illnesses always keep occurring and deaths [425] happen, etc., sacrificing never does quite die out and the religion of the Khasi which reverences spirits in the most varied ways remains in existence.

7. Prayer of Thanks after Receiving Good Health. (22)

22. Cf. also the prayer of thanks and entreaty at the end of the Nongkrem-Puja, Dr. Becker, Anthropos, IV (1909), p. 902.

Sacrifices are certainly offered chiefly in times of trouble. But the Khasi do not

782 forget a good deed received. If someone receives his health again by sacrifice, he brings a sacrifice of thanks and says:

To sngew ko blei ko laubei te wei nga la shem ia ka nia ka lynti ka long jot ka long rem jong phi, te kynrad hajar nguh te sngewsynei ho, ba la kum bieit kum lyndet nga u khun u ksiew!

Hear then! o god! o Jaubei! After I have recognized thy reasons and ways, from whence thy destruction and thy blame have come (which you have found in me), thus, o my lord, I thank thee a thousandfold, and hearken unto me graciously, since I unwittingly, since I opposed thee, I thy child and grandson!

To ai ka khiah ka nang, ngan sa kynmaw ngan sa kyndit namar kata ka nia kat haba shong ka nguh ka dem u dykhot u lamjew u kpu u rynsi u klong u ksaw law ka shoh ka ther ka pisa ka lynga, hei wat die rem ngiat shuh ho kum kynnin kum hunne, ap ia ka nia ka lynti pyllun katta mo!

Health and wealth, it will always hover before my eyes (thy command), these causes (of the sickness), wherever I live and settle (sit down), wherever the piece inclines itself and the sour thing and the bread and the cake, the gourd and the gourd bottle, loosen (take away) the blows and the rattling down, the difficulties and the oppression! O do not sell so dear any more as yesterday and early

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today, but await with patience the cause and the way! So much, is it not so! --

II. Religion in Various Aspects of Life.

553 1. Giving a Name (tap lubri tap kyrteng).
244 By tap lubri tap kyrteng one means the
782 ceremony of the giving of a name to a child. In the section on sang I have already indicated the various taboos of a pregnant mother in regard to her husband.

At the birth of a child now, so the Khasi say, there are not as many ceremonies as at the death of a relative. For birth is anyhow in and of itself a feast of joy, since one is more joyful when a person enters life than when he departs from life.

/426/ When a child is born, sacrifices are made on the next day (if it was born in the evening or in the night, on the following morning) and the ceremony of giving the name is performed. The sacrificer must be a relative of the child's. Among the Synteng, aunts of the child are called on by preference as executors of the sacrifice. The umbilical chord is cut off with a sharp-edged piece of bamboo and the child is bathed in warm water. The afterbirth (ka shynnai) is carefully kept in an earthern pot in the house (nongpei). Instruments are then placed at the child's side as symbols of later occupations, near a girl a knife (i wait) and a woven bamboo carrier (i star); but near a boy a bow (ka tyntieh) and three arrows (ki 'nam). The sacrificer fetches a little plate, on which he sprinkles rice meal and fills a gourd bottle (u klong) with rice brandy, which he previously mixes with water. He

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782 arranges all this on a bamboo swing (u prah) and then begins the sacrifice with the following words:

Te ha sngew ko blei trai kynrad ko thaw-bynriew ko buhbynriew te ba long ka jer ba long ka thoh ban neh ka nam ban neh ka kyrteng ban long u lubri ban long ka kyrteng wei la suk la sngewbha phi ka blei ban khot da kata ka kyrteng to kein ba un long tymmen un long san un sain la ka kur la ka jaid un bad la ka khein ka bishar ha kpoh la iing mo.

Te sngew sa ka jong me u thawlang babha bamiat te wei ym don ka sang ka kyndiah te la long kynthei la long shynrang te a un long rangbah man rangbah yn sah ka nam yn sah ka kyrteng mo!

And so hear, o god and lord, o creator and maker of men! for now the name-giving and the noting-down shall occur, so that the fame may last and the name be kept, after it has pleased thee, o goddess, to name with this name. Now may it (the child) live to an old age and become great and strong in his descendants and races, and may he keep and observe the commands and justice of his family.

And so hear thou also, o thou good and beautiful Thaulang, since now for once no taboo and no difficulty exist and little woman and little man are (and a child was born), so may he become big and become a strong man and may the fame remain and the name remain preserved. Is it no so!

Meanwhile the sacrificer slowly sprinkles the brandy on the rice meal so that a dough is made. Now one seeks for the name of the child.

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844 While he pronounces several names, he very slow-
782 ly pours the rice liquor out on the ground. The name, then, that coincides with the drop that takes the longest to free itself from the neck of the gourd bottle, is given the child. When the name is found by this method, the sacrificer makes a mark on each foot of the child with the dough mentioned above, thus giving him the name.

553 /427/ But if somebody comes into the hut
844 by chance while the liquor is being poured out and says something, then a name formed from these words is given the child. Then the parents and relatives of the child must eat three times from this dough. When this is all over, the father takes the placenta, sprinkles rice meal on it and swings it three times over the head of the child. Thereupon he leaves the house and fastens the jar including the contents to a tree near the hut. Today this ceremony is seldom done exactly. Usually the father only goes in the yard and buries the placenta somewhere.

553 When the father returns, his feet are sprinkled with water ban khuid ban jhiah krat i khunlung, i.e. so that the child may stay healthy. A rice cake (u purew) which was prepared earlier is now eaten by everybody. Thereupon all the relatives sit down, the relatives of the wife on the left and the relatives of the husband on the right. A piece of the rice cake (purew) is dipped in water and the toes of all the guests are wiped with it. After the end of these ceremonies the utensils which were placed at the side of the child, the bow, the three arrows, the knife and the carrying straps, are taken away and carefully fastened to the inside of the roof of the hut.

553 Here are several examples of heathen Khasi names:

u Kisorai	ka Nobitri
u Rasmoni	ka Derisi
u Jaweng	ka Nimai
u Syer	ka Elimai
u Sniang	ka Korimai

The names with the article u are for the masculine sex, those with the article ka for the feminine sex.

The customs of the name giving are not the same everywhere. It is reported (23) that on

23. Gurdon, The Khasis, pp. 124-127.

such occasions a banana leaf with a pounded yellow root and five dried fish should be placed in readiness. An older man, who understands name giving (kaba jer khun), places a banana leaf on the ground and sprinkles it with water. He takes the gourd bottle in his hand and calls on god as a witness. The people gathered there then mention a lot of names, which the one offering the sacrifice must repeat. While he is saying the names, he pours rice brandy out of the gourd bottle onto the ground. The name that is said with the last drop from the gourd bottle is the name of the child.

"Or one lets two little bamboo sticks (igrâ) fall to the ground. If these remain in the formation of a cross, the name that has been spoken meanwhile is the one kept. Otherwise this is done until the desired position of the sticks occurs. But this way takes a lot of time and trouble, since it is sometimes a long time before the little bamboo sticks lie in a crossed position. Mr. Jenkins reports

553 that a Khasi told him, [428] that all kinds of nuisance and deceptions occur with this method of name giving since one likes to save time and trouble."

"The dried fish are held by each end and cut into two pieces. Finally one wipes the yellow root that has been mixed with water on the right foot of the father, the mother, and the child."

844 782 553 Among the Synteng the following items are offered in sacrifice immediately after the birth of a child: some rice meal, eggs, roots and leaves. After the child is a month old (one often waits two months) the ceremony of the name giving is performed. This is done, if not by the sister of the mother, then by the oldest man of the sib. Sacrifices are brought again at this celebration, specifically two hens and a goat.

844 The parents of a newborn child are not allowed to cross a river, nor may they wash their clothes as long as the umbilical cord is not healed, since otherwise the mountain or river devil would harm the child.

845 Twins are considered a punishment, which has been incurred by somebody in the sib for violating a taboo. If the twins are of different sex, their bones may not later be placed in the common family grave.

782 755 2. Sacrifices during the Illness of a Member of the Family.

[753] Usually sacrifices are made only for internal illnesses. Because the Khasi cannot explain the origin of these illnesses, they are of the opinion that a devil has caused them. He must be angry with the person concerned

755 and must now be propitiated by a sacrifice.
782 For outside illness, for example, wounds which they have incurred by falling or hitting something, they do not make a sacrifice because the cause of the illness is known to them.

For internal sickness the sacrifice is usually made in the court area if unfavorable weather does not prevent it. What should be sacrificed is determined only by the sacrificial priest (lyngdoh). If the illness is not important, an egg is sacrificed. (24) The

24. See above, egg throwing.

sacrificing priest takes a rather large dish (ka pliang kynthei) on which he places a lattice of little bamboo sticks. Now he takes an egg, caresses it, calls it goddess (ka blei), strews it with rice and smears it with red mud. Then he throws it with all his might onto the bamboo lattice. The inside of the egg runs through the lattice into the dish. He does this with one egg after another. This egg sacrifice is performed every morning and every evening until the sick person is well again. Many make the sacrifice early before sunrise and in the evening after sunset.

If the illness is of a more serious kind, chickens are sacrificed. This is done in the following way. The sacrificial priest strews rice on the chicken's head, then places the neck of the animal on the left index finger and holds the head of the animal down with his left thumb. Then he cuts open the chicken's throat with a knife. (25) The sacrificer

25. Cf. Table II, Picture 2: Sacrifice of a Chicken among the Khasi.

782 now draws the bronchia out through the opening
755 he had made [429] and according to their position he judges whether the sick person will get well or not. (26)

26. Cf. Sacrifice of the rooster, ka jingkhia syiar.

If the illness is still worse and death is feared, then the cleverest and most experienced sacrificial priests are called. Goats and pigs, and if the sick man belongs to the well-to-do, also cows are sacrificed by these. (27) All the relatives participate in the

27. Cf. above, Khein Ksuid

sacrificial meal with the priest.

If the illness is leading towards certain death, sacrifices are made until there is no longer any sign of life. Thus the father of a sick boy in Umpling, who himself was a sacrificial priest, sacrificed the most beautiful chickens all day long until the boy died in the evening from vomiting of blood.

Among the Synteng only rice, eggs, hens, pigs, and deer, but no cows, are sacrificed. Certainly many sibs are allowed to eat the meat of cows, but they are exceptions. Of the sacrificed animals the gods (or devils) receive only some blood, some of the heart and the intestines; the rest is eaten by those present.

763 3. Sacrifices and Ceremonies for a Death.

782 Without interruption -- until death occurs -- sacrifices are offered for a dying

763
[782] person. Whether death has occurred is determined by calling his name. If no further sign of life is observed, howling and wailing begin to announce the mourning. Tears are extremely rare.

764 The dead person is bathed and washed (pynsum-pynsleh), wrapped in his clothes and reverently placed on a bamboo mat. One is particularly careful with the limbs; for the hands and feet are stretched out completely (phyneit ki kjat ki kti) and placed straight (pynthiah beit). To indicate mourning one does not wind the dead man's turban from right to left as usual but the other way around. In the territory of Lamin one puts betel nuts, which are wrapped in pepper leaves, between the turban and the forehead. These betel nuts are placed in a row so that they look like a crown or wreath. Every morning and every evening, as long as the body is in the house, one places cooked rice and dried fish by the head of the dead man. One calls this giving ai ka ja miet ja step (morning and evening meal).

764
782 How long the dead man stays in the hut varies with each sib. Many are cremated on the day after death, whereas others several days later, but always the body stays an uneven number of days in the hut. A betel nut with a pepper leaf and lime is placed with the food as well as a bamboo beaker with water. Finally one puts the "stomach egg" (ka leng kpoh) on the stomach of the dead man (in the area of the stomach). This is the start of the actual sacrifice.

The sacrificer takes a chicken, strews rice on its head, holds it ready for killing, and says while doing this:

782
764 [430] To sngew mo ba long u krad lynti u krad syngkieng, te ba poi hi ka sngi ka ia te wei ngam lap ia ka khein ka bishar te la pom ka tyrut ka smer la pom ka bneng ka khyndew, te kynrad sngew ho, ba men leit da ba suk da ba beit ha kpoh la ka kmie ka kiaw u nie u ma suidnia ka laubei mo?

Hear, o thou road scraper, thou path scratcher, since the day and hour have come and I can no longer get along, am with sacrifice and justice, so have the Tyrut and the Smer struck me and heaven and earth have struck me and so my lord, stop then, that thou goest in peace, right and righteousness of the stomach (in the family) in peace and harmony with the uncle and the cousins. Judge thyself, o goddess Jaubei, is it no so?

Now even though otherwise only good chickens may be used for sacrifices, in this case it does not make any difference whether the rooster (u iar krad lynti) is a fine example or not. The next best is simply taken.

If the dead man is cremated "poorly," i.e. if the relatives are not in a position to pay greater costs, only this rooster and a handful of rice is sacrificed.

If the dead man is cremated "richly," i.e. if the relatives are in a position to pay for the usual ceremonies along with numerous sacrifices, a pig is sacrificed and each of the masculine relatives must give a handful of rice which is also sacrificed immediately.

Various sacrifices are offered, according to whether the dead man is to be cremated on a base built of stone as is the case of the very

764
782 rich, or in a kind of coffin (shyngoid). In the first case a steer (ox) is sacrificed, in the other case a pig (u 'niang shyngoid). The horns of the steer (u masi pyllait) are painted gold or silver. Today one does this only with gold or silver paper. Then the animal is let loose after it has been strewn with rice and sprinkled with water ('iad-um). Anybody who captures it can keep it or kill it. As soon as the animal is let loose, one calls it masi-tamrong. If one wants to set up on the cremation area bamboo poles with white cloth pieces on them as if they were flags, which is only done for the very well-to-do, a rooster (u 'iar kait) is sacrificed.

[461] Since no work may be done on the day of cremation, all the preparations must be completed, such as fetching wood from the forest ('law kyndang), erecting the funeral pyre, arranging for the necessary sacrificial animals and other sacrificial gifts, etc.

4. The Cremation (ka jingthang).

The Khasi burn their dead. At the crematory ceremony one can distinguish various classes or kinds, either according to the wood [431] which is used or according to the catafalque (scaffolding for the body or structure above the dead person) which is erected.

The methods of cremation according to the differences in the wood are:

1. The cremation, for which only uncut wood is used, that is, wood as it is found without any kind of preparation. This type of cremation is made only by the very poor (uba duk eh) who have no more relatives. There is no sacrifice made at this cremation

764 (khlem dykhot).
782 2. Cremation in which the wood used is cut with a knife (da wait). Here a handful of rice is taken from the relatives (ka pynkham ka pynsoh) and a sacrifice offered, "the piece and the sour thing."

3. Cremation in which the wood used is cut clean as boards (ka lyntang). In this class the drum (ka ksing) and the kettledrum (ka dah) are beaten, guns (ka suloi) and the pipe (ka man, i.e., a cannon) are fired, sacrifices are offered, "the piece and the sour thing (u kykhot u lamjew)," an ox (u masi) and a pig (u sniang) are sacrificed. Usually the sword dance (shad wait) is also performed.

764 The method of cremation according to the differences in structure are:

1. Thang syrkhait is that type of cremation in which no kind of catafalque (structure) is used. In this case the dead person is placed on a kind of bamboo lattice work.

2. Thang lyngkhason is that form of cremation for which a catafalque is erected. The dead person is put in a kind of coffin made of young slender trees, bamboo, and boards. This coffin is covered with red cloth with decorations of silver edgings. Over the body, which one does not see, a structure is erected of flowering bushes and figures. One likes to make a peacock of wood to which paper is attached. (28) The whole thing is

28. This ceremony might have originated

764

in the valley and been brought in from there.

richly decorated with paper flowers. The structure is over the head of the [436] deceased. Shell money (sbai) is distributed to the people at this cremation.

3. Thang shan is that method of cremation, in which the expense goes still further. In addition to the above mentioned structure over the body, a baldachin of four high bamboo poles is also erected over the funeral pyre, which is kept up after the cremation. The baldachin is decorated with colored cloth or paper. Only the very eminent people and the group mother (Stammutter) are cremated in this fashion.

The wood for the cremations is always taken from a holy forest ('law kyndang). But dry wood is also always brought along from the hut, since the green wood fetched from the 'law kyndang would not burn immediately. The fire is also not lighted at the place of cremation, but one takes a firebrand from the hut.

[432] Not until all the relatives have arrived and all the preparations for the cremation are completed -- for no work may be done on the day of cremation -- is the dead man brought to the place of cremation. He is placed, fully clothed, on a bamboo bier (ka krong). At the four ends of the bier, often also at the middle of the long sides, so that there are six of them, bamboo sticks are raised upright and a white cloth is fastened around the whole or crosswise -- depending on whether the body is that of a man or a woman. Weapons,

764 a shield, bow, arrow, and knife (wait) are placed beside the man and ornaments beside a woman. All this, however, is not burned, but is taken away before the fire is lighted, with the exception of the woolen or silk cloth that is attached to the upper ends of the bamboo poles. If the corpse has received money and food, a sacrifice is offered, usually a goat. Poorer people pour a little brandy on the ground.

Now the funeral procession moves towards the place of cremation. This place is designated in each village and is usually located on the slopes near oak forests.(29) As pre-

29. Cf. Table II, Picture 3: Place of Cremation of the Khasi with a stone substructure.

viously during the night, when the dead man lay in the hut, guns are also shot off now, and if the people have wealth, paper bombs are set off. On the way copper coins are distributed to poor people. The tom-tom resounds, the eternal, monotonous beat on the large drum and the melancholy piping of the flutes (sharati). With great wailing from the mourners, in which the women relatives of the dead person excel, they finally reach the place of cremation, which is not sought out until late in the afternoon.

764 First a goat (u'lang mawkjat) is sacrificed
782 here. Then the body is lifted up on the catafalque, which has already been prepared, with his head towards the west and his feet towards the east. A rooster is now sacrificed, which they call 'iar syngkhong. If the deceases is well-to-do, a he-goat is also slaughtered,

764 which is called u 'lang sait ksuid or "the
782 he-goat which washes off the devil." The meaning of this is: the he-goat is similar to the "scapegoat" which takes the sins of the deceased upon himself.

Among the poor (that is among those who only use uncut wood as well as those who use wood cut with the ka wait) there is no funeral.

Now the closest relatives start the fire and after these the children of the deceased, if there are any present, apply fire. The cloth on the upper end of the bamboo poles flame brightly and is burned up in no time. The few clothes of the deceased are also soon in flames and then the actual burning of the body begins.

If the pile of wood catches fire, a rooster u 'iar padat is sacrificed immediately. This rooster is swung three times over the funeral pyre just as one swings incense and its blood is smeared three times on the pyre. Then the "stomach egg" (leng kpoh) is broken at the head end of the funeral pyre. Then three ar-
[823] rows ('nam tympem) [433] are thrown by hand as far as one can in three directions. One to the east, one to the south, and the third to
[775] the north. But never to the west. Because according to the belief of the Khasi the west leads to the unending, thither go the souls of the dead, there lies eternity. (30)

[626] 30. When the Khasi would like to have somebody go far away and they curse him, they speak as follows: to leit sha ban sep ka sngi shaba mih u bnai, i.e., go away where the sun sets and the moon rises: (Go away where the pepper grows.)

ooo (Go away where the pepper grows.)

764 Meanwhile others are completely occupied with the burning of the body. Soon the intestines pour out into the fire, whereupon they begin to sizzle. A horrible smell comes from the crackling intestines. The steam that is developing in the skull from the fire causes a violent explosion in the skull which sounds like a gunshot. After the pile of wood has burned down and the yellowish green smoke has gone, you still see in the bluish fire the outlines of the black, steaming and cooking corpse. Now the men, who are already quite drunk from rice brandy, poke around in the fire with bamboo sticks and pour liquor and oil on it, which causes the flames to blaze up again. I saw in Lamin at a cremation that the heart was left as the last thing, which was then burned by itself with great sadness on the [273] part of the cremators. The objectionable scene of cremation could not occur without an [782] excess taking of alchohol. As a conclusion a goat is sacrificed (u 'lang dholia) on the spot and the relatives take their departure as they place betel nuts on the burned up funeral pyre with these words: khublei khie leit bam kwai ha iing u blei (god guard thee, go and eat betel nuts in the house of god!

In some places it is customary before the cremation for a man to get drunk with liquor. He then represents the devil and performs all sorts of tricks.

764 782 When the corpse is burned, one then collects the remains of the bones which did not quite get burned up. (31) These are washed

31. Cf. Table III, Picture 1: Collecting the Remains and the Bones

784 782 that are not burned up and the Ashes (among the Khasi).

and wrapped in a small piece of cloth and then put in an urn (jar). While a woman is doing this, a man strews rice on the ground and entreats the spirit of the deceased not to disturb his relatives who have remained behind in the world, since everything was done correctly at the cremation. When this entreaty is finished, the urn with the remains of the bones is placed under the tombstone (maw shying). The remains of poor people are also put under this stone but not in an urn. The sacrificial rice (ka japha) is also placed by the urn as food for the deceased (cf. the next section).

785 782 Early the next day they count up together the expenditures they have had. Speeches are made by the u kni u kpa (the maternal uncle) to the assembled children and grandchildren. This u kni u kpa [434] has been the priest and judge of the sib up until now. Now all business stops for three days. But on the third day they gamble (draw lots - bud pyleng) with two eggs to see who will be the leader of the sib of the deceased in the future, so that one will know to whom one should turn when sacrifices must be offered or quarrels are to be smoothed out. Thereby the present u kni u kpa speaks in relation to the deceased:

Hei ap ia ka nia ka jutang ynda ia lum ia kynshew ia u kur u para u khun ka meinah ka meisan yn sa tai ia ka khein ka bi shar yn sa long ka

So hearken unto the words of the promise! After the relatives and brothers and sisters of the spheres-in-law and aunts are gathered, we will sift

765 ai ban ka ai sa ia me
782 ka kynrung ka hyntaw
ka pyrkhiah ka pynsarg,
dih sa ka kiad sa ka
un moi

our words and our sacrifices and out judgments and then will be: to care for thee and to nourish thee and to carry over thy bones and to care for thee in sickness and to make thee healthy. So we wish to drink the liquor and the water, is it no so! (32)

[279] 32. The water is a fermented rice water, that is variously called rice beer. The last sentence has the sense of an affirmation and of an oath.

Hei angew ryngkat
ne phi ka blei ka
laubei ka nonglum
nongkyrshew shi khrum
ka nar moi

So hear then, o goddess, thou Jaubei, thou who has gathered us here, one and all (33) the whole sib

33. Shi khrum - actually the hollow place, the place under the house.

and stone and iron, is it not so!

764 As there are various customs for sacri-
782 fices, so are the ceremonies for cremation various. It is reported (34) that on the day of

34. Gurdon, The Khasi, p. 133).

cremation pigs are slaughtered by the relatives of the deceased. Those, who cannot afford to

764
782 sacrifice pigs, bring liquor, some of which they pour out on the funeral pyre. The coffin is raised onto a bamboo bier, and some money is placed next to the body so that the spirit of the deceased can buy food on the journey. Cotton or (in the case of rich people) silk cloths are wound around the coffin, crosswise if the deceased is a man, in the form of a square if the deceased is a woman. Before the bier is [783] raised up, one throws a handful of rice and pours a little water from a jug in front of the door and sacrifices a goat. These are purification ceremonies. The funeral procession is now arranged and slowly wends its way accompanied by a great deal of music. For rich people guns are shot off in between times. Copper coins are also strewn along the way. As the funeral pyre is approached, the corpse is placed on display and the peices of meat of the sacrificed animals which lay beside the body are thrown away. Then one arranges three loaves of baked bread, an egg, the lower jawbones of the animals which were sacrificed, the left [435] foot of the rooster (u 'iar krad lynti), a jug of water, food in a dish, and three arrows. A goat is now sacrificed. The body of the deceased is placed in the coffin, if one is used, and then lifted up on the pile of wood, with the head towards the west and the feet towards the east. Pieces of wood are now placed around the corpse, and the egg ("stomach egg") is broken, not as is often supposed over the stomach of the deceased but rather it is thrown on the pile of wood in the direction of the feet. The fire is now lighted by the kur or member of the clan and then by the children, if there are any. Another rooster (u 'iar padat) is sacrificed, the blood

764 of which is smeared three times on the pile
782 of wood. After the clothes are removed, the bier is broken into pieces. The edibles and the jawbones are now placed by the head of the deceased. After the sacrifice of the rooster the three arrows are shot off from a bow, one towards the north, another towards the south, and one towards the east. One calls these arrows the 'nam tympem. It should perhaps be mentioned that the number of arrows, which are shot off during the cremation, corresponds with the number of arrows which are used during the name giving. As soon as the fire is burning, another goat is sacrificed (lang dholia). In some cases all the clothes are burned with the body; in other cases the clothes are only held over the fire and then put aside for further use (which is the case only among the poor). Before the relatives and friends leave the place of cremation, they place betel nuts on the pile of wood and say farewell to the deceased with these words: "Khublei, go and eat betel nuts in the house of god" (according to Gurdon).

5. Burial of the Bones

764 There is a threefold burial of the bones, i.e., of the remains of the bones not burned up and of the ashes. But these burials are not varied for the wealthy, the well-to-do, or the poor, as in the case of cremation, but all the bones of the dead are buried three times in different places. The burial rite for the first or second burial is essentially the same. The rite of the third is considerably more ceremonial.

The first burial occurs immediately after the cremation near the place of cremation in

764 the maw shying, the place of temporary keeping.

The second burial occurs later, when the bones are transferred from the maw shying into the maw phew. Maw phew are places for keeping the ashes of members of a narrower family circle. The bones of the male relatives are kept here as well as the bones of the female relatives, but separately from each other.

The third burial finally occurs in a very ceremonial way, when the bones from the various maw phew are transferred into the common grave of the whole sib maw bah.

/436/ A Schematic Representation of the Transfer of the Bones of a Sib:

1. Burial: Cremation: maw shying — Cremation: maw shying — Cremation: maw shying — Cremation: maw shying — Cremation: maw shying
(Bones of a single dead person, male or female) (single grave)

2. Burial: maw phew — maw phew
(Bones of men and women separated) Family grave)

3. Burial: maw bah
(Bones of the men and women separated) (Sib grave)

a) First Burial (maw shying)

As soon as the cremation is over, the participants form a procession and bring the ashes or bones to the maw shying. One man hurries ahead, strewing leaves (ding shit = hot wood) alternately with grains of rice on the
764 road. Then the woman follows who carries the
292 bones. She is festively dressed and has a kind of scarf around her shoulders such as the Catholic priests wear for carrying the monstrance. In a village south of Lamin I saw

764
[292] on such an occasion a scarf which was decorated with gold edges and gold fringes. Whereas the relatives following next may walk and speak as they choose, the woman dressed in the scarf, who is carrying the bones wrapped in white cloth with respect against her breast, is required to be silent, not to vary to the right or to the left, but to walk in a straight line to the maw shing [sic] as far as this is possible.

764
782 Having arrived at the place, a rooster is first sacrificed, which one calls the "guide to heaven" (u 'iar krad lynti), because he is supposed to accompany the spirit of the deceased into the other world. Afterwards three loaves of rice bread, an egg and brandy are sacrificed by the sacrificial priest (nongknia), so that the ashes may rest well here. The bones are placed in an earthern pot after they are well washed, and the jar is bound with a white linen cloth. The three loaves of bread along with the egg and the left foot of the previously sacrificed rooster are placed beside the jar in the prepared grave (if one can call the hole that) and the grave is closed with a stone. Betel nuts, pepper leaves, and lime are placed on top.

b) Second Burial (maw phew)

After a while the bones in the separate maw shying are collected, but the bones of the men and the bones of the women are kept and carried separately. In a manner similar to the above the transfer into the maw phew occurs. There the bones are laid separated in the prepared places, and the usual sacrifices of the rooster, the kpu, and the liquor are offered.

c) Third Burial (maw bah)

764 The ceremonial transfer of the bones from the various maw phew into the common sib grave maw bah is probably the most important of all the ceremonies /437/ which the Khasi have. For not merely the precise and orderly fulfillment of every prescribed ceremony and custom, even the smallest, is necessary here, but also an emotional or spiritual preparation is needed, which neither occurs nor is demanded among the Khasi for anything else. This emotional or spiritual preparation consists in the requirement that all members of a whole sib must live in peace with each other, since otherwise the ceremonial transfer of the bones may not take place.

[787] If all quarrels and discords are smoothed out, this is determined with the greatest exactitude, and a sacrificer who is taken from the sib inquires by egg throwing and the sacrifice of a chicken, which day would be suitable for the ceremonial act. If the day is determined in this way, all the relatives of the dead meet together in the house of the group mother /Stammutter/ (iing seng): the children, the brothers and sisters, the nephews and nieces (shi kur shi para ryngkat u khun ka meinah meisan baroh), the great uncles and the little uncles (u nie-bah u nierit). Standing, they call upon the goddess who has created the members of the whole sib and say:

764 782

Kumno? hukum phi ka blei thaw bynriew buh bynriew ba ngan ieng ka lum ka kyn shew ka thep ka tian ia u suidiap u nongiap u lor u kap

How dost thou, o goddess, wish that I stand (before thee, before thy face) to gather the hard earned, the stored up, the spirits of the dead,

764
782 baroh na tynrai ka iingseng iingkhad-duh? the chiefs of the family and the old family chiefs of the deceased from the tribal house?

If the goddess now sanctions it, then they gather the sacrificial gifts and the sacrificial money (which is often thousands of rupees) to use them for the festivities.

Two women then go to the various maw phew and reverently fetch the bones that were placed there. One woman carries the bones of the male dead, the other the female ones, and both bring them to the house of the group mother, where they are ceremoniously placed and decorated with flowers and beautiful cloths. Now the spirits of the dead receive nourishment (ai bam), in that a pig, a rooster and a steer are sacrificed. The best pieces of these animals are kept in a basket in the house for a later division among the participants. The rest is sacrificed.

764
535 Then there is dancing. (35) This cere -

35. Cf. Table III, Picture 2: Ceremonial Dance in Honor of the Deceased.

monial dance in honor of the deceased lasts either three or five or nine days, whatever seems best (and how long the collected money lasts). A place in front of the house is festively arranged and used as the place for dancing (lympung). Music is played and liquor distributed.

764
769 On the day on which they intend to transfer the bones, the drums (ka ksing) and the kettledrums (ka nakra) are beaten, /438/ the flutes (ka sharati) are blown, guns (suloi) and cannons (ka man) are shot off. An ancestral

764 769 doll is made of bamboo and this is supposed to represent either the great grandmother (the Jaubei of the sib) or the great great uncle (suidnia). They walk to the mawniam mawrukom (the ceremonial stones, ancestral stones) (36)

36. Gurdon, The Khasis, p. 141, gives another description of these customs. He says: In Cherrapunji two dolls are made, called ka puron and u tyngshop. The former is supposed to represent the Jaubei, the latter the suidnia. The dancers hold these dolls in their hands.

[211] with this ancestral doll (u tyngshop). While some dance, others set up "resting stones" or "foot stones" or "road stones" (maw kjat or maw lynti) on the way to the maw bah for the spirits of the dead, where they can rest on the way to the common grave. These stones are about a meter high and stand three in a row at each place. In front of them a flat stone like a platter is placed on four small stones which form a base or feet (maw kjat, i.e., stone foot). (37)

37. Cf. Table III, Picture 3: "Foot stone or road stone" among the Khasi.

On the day on which the dance ends they arrange ka pyngrei, i.e., a marriage feast of the spirits of the deceased, who died in their youth (grown but unmarried or childless). For this they choose two poor old people a man and a woman, of small size whom they pay for this.

764 The man is the groom of the dead young girl,
769 the old woman the bride of the dead youth. They have the two scramble for the spirits' rice (ki pyniaknieh bam ka ja snaiap) and have them jump over the rice mortar (thlong) and the rice pestle. Then arrows are thrown as far as possible, which the two people are supposed to seize. This game of catching means the driving out of demons who surround the maw bah and wish to prevent the approach to the stones. Then one strews seed rice (u kaw rawai) on the road from the house to the end of the village. The two little people must now run with sticks (da ki diengduh) and thresh or beat the rice. This happens three times, one after another.

764 When it has become bright day, a handful of rice is taken from each of the relatives, as well as the contribution for defraying the
[782] costs of the whole festivities. Then they fetch an "altar he-goat" (u' lang duwan), in order to cut off its head on the village altar (ha ka duwan ka shnong ka mulak). Now they make merry with drums and flags (ka ksing ka lama). The children and grandchildren sit down together and greet each other solemnly,
[535] especially the "cousin" (u kha pka). Then a shield dance (mastieh) (38) is held. They

38. Cf. Table IV, Picture 1: Khasi men, ready for the shield dance.

perform three rounds. Then a he-goat is slaughtered, and all dancers with the shields bow three times before the "cousin" (u kha pka). Each of the sons of the group house (Stammhaus) does the same thing.

Now everybody rises, and someone sacrifices the scapegoat u' lang sait ksuid. A

764 A
[335] weapon dance is performed in which the sons follow one behind the other (according to age) (39) (shad wait, i.e. weapon dance).

39. Cf. Table IV, Picture 2: Weapon dance of the Khasi at the third burial.

764
782 [439] When the weapon dance has ended, they go in a procession (as above for the maw shying) to the maw kjat or maw lynti. Having arrived there, each of the sons slaughters a he-goat by separating the head of the animal from the body with one blow. The usual sacrifice takes place. But usually there are not a lot of he-goats slaughtered (since there is not enough money) but only one, which is then called u' lang maw lynti. The retinue or escort of the sons ends here (hangne la kut ka jingleit on lynti ki khun kha).

The others continue on to the maw bah. Having arrived there, they open the door (the closure of the container for the bones). A man, who is paid for it, crows three times to represent the spirit rooster iar iap. This occurs in front of the stone. Then all the spirits who are in the cave room are awakened (kyrsiew) by someone saying:

to khie to khie la wan u khun la wan u ksiew!

Stand up! Stand up! The children have come, the grandchildren have come!

Then they place the bones of the deceased inside, separated according to sex. In addition there are the sacrificial gifts: the bread and the cake, which they spread out (siang). Also morning and evening rice (i.e. cooked rice ready for eating) they place (theh —

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782 pour out) on the stone, also betel nuts and pepper leaves and ka reng ka ngab (the jawbones of the /sacrificed/ animals). The contribution (u khrong u khwang) is also added. Then the stone is closed.

Then they strike three times with a stick (sympat da ki dieng) on the stone, which they call tan ding (taken from fire), saying:

Hei nga tan ding nga tan theh ioh don uba mang uba thew u tynjuh u pan tien wat

See, I come towards the fire, see, I pour out the sacrificial gift, (40) so

40.- i.e., I perform the ceremonies faithfully.

leit khih wat leit win ap la ka khein ka bishar pyllun ho mei, ho iaw, ho nie, ho ma shi khrum ka maw ka nar!

that someone does not perhaps come and infringe and seek to demand a sacrifice. Do not disturb thyself! Be calm! and await patiently thy time of sacrifice. Is it not so, little mother, is it not so, mother-in-law, is it not so great uncle, is it not so, cousin, is it not so, all ye cousins who are under the stone!

On the next morning they figure out what everything has cost and what has been used. Then they take sacrificial liquor and say ('suit' means actually: they take it, present it, and hold it up ceremoniously):

Hei ko nie ko ma ko mei ko iaw ka suidiap

See, o uncle, see, o cousin, see, o little

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782 ko nongiap shi khrum /407 ka maw sngew ho la lut la sep katta to nang kyrsoi to nang kyrsih la iaid ka iew ka duwar ka kitnong ka bylla ka khaii ka pateng!

mother, see o grandmother of the deceased, o all ye dead, who are under this stone, listen! Thus and thus much we have used and given out, bless and increase it. May all our doings, all our household, all our daily wage, all our business make us happy!

Then they divide the remains of the sacrificial gifts (also the pieces of meat which were kept in the basket) and bow down and mourn all the deceased cousins and aunts. And when the sacrificial remains have been divided, they give everybody four to five rupees (five marks, sixty pfennigs to seven marks according to the peace evaluation) in addition and say:

Shim kein khun to leit long bynriew to leit man byn riew to roi to pa to long spah to man spah wei kumba nga la kha la long shisha bam don ka sang bamdon ka ma a yn sah ka nam yn sah ka rong yn sah ka ummat yn sah ka umpung mo.

So, take, my son, grow and be strong, be happy and successful; may thy wealth increase, as I conceived thee without shame and wrong; may thy reputation and thy honor endure, and also the tears and the wells (41) should endure, is it not so.

41. i.e., the descendants who will mourn thee.

Thus they do it to all the children one after the other. After three days they destroy

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782 the doll, whether it was (i.e. was supposed to represent) a male or a female one.

In conclusion they sacrifice a pig as a food sacrifice which they call the "doll pig" (u niang ai bam tyngshop).

After the passage of a month they sacrifice a pig again as a food sacrifice, which they call the "month pig" (u niang ai bam lait bnai).

And finally after a year they sacrifice still another pig as a food sacrifice which they call the "year pig" (u niang ai bam lait snem). (42)

42. Cf. Table I, Picture 1: Third burial place of the Khasi.

Gurdon (43) also describes this ceremony

43. Gurdon, The Khasis, p. 142.

differently, saying: "After they have arrived at the grave, the bones are washed three times in a basin (this is a custom from Cherrapunji). In Maushai the bones are exposed to the heat of a fire which has been lighted on a little platform. Then the stone door of the cinerarium is opened. The bones of the women are placed inside with the urn next to the wall which is farthest away from the door. But the bones of the men are placed next to the door. Many sibs place the bones of the men on the right side and the bones of the women on the left side. Then sacrifices of food and drink are offered the ancestors on a stone in front of the grave. The men perform a ceremonial dance with sword /40a Table I, 1. Third Burial Place. 2. the village Raliang/1

1 [cf. Cat. 116, p. 66 -- Amalgat]

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Third Burial Place

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/140a/ The Village Raliang

Table II

787 The Egg Oracle

782 Sacrifice of a Chicken

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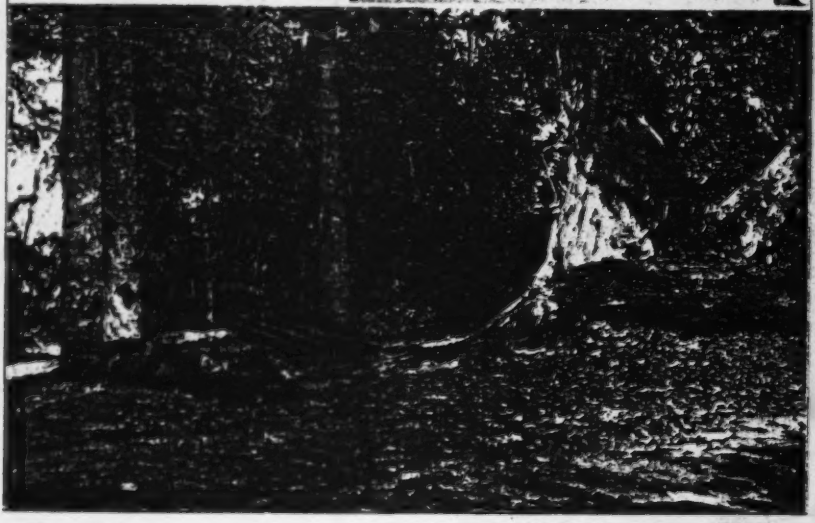

[440b] The Place of Cremation.

Table III

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[211]

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[140c] Gathering the Remains and the Ashes Ceremonial Dance. Foot Stone and Road Stone.

2:Stegmiller-69 M-4,5(no date)1921 AR7 Khasi AR7

Table IV

Ready for the Shield Dance.

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[Mod]

Weapon Dance.

764
782 /440b Table II, 1. The Egg Oracle. 2. Sacrifice of a Chicken. 3. The Place of Cremation./ /440c/ Table III, 1. Gathering the Remains and the Ashes. 2. Ceremonial Dance. 3. Foot Stone and Road Stone./ /440d Table IV, 1. Ready for the Shield Dance. Weapon Dance./ /441/ and shield (three times), and the door of the grave is closed. Afterwards a flag is planted on the grave.

All the people go away, with the exception of three men. One of these sacrifices a rooster (iar tanding) in front of the grave, the second one sits behind the sacrificer and holds three firebrands in his hands, which he moves back and forth. This man crows three times like a rooster. The (third) man behind the grave listens most carefully to every noise that is noticed meanwhile in the grave. The belief actually exists, that if the ceremonies have not been performed properly, the grave will now tremble and move. When the three watchers are satisfied and convinced that there was no motion in the grave, they go home and report it to the relatives. This ceremony is called tan ding or the test by fire.

On the next morning, the woman who is the householder of the house of the group /Stammhaus/ divides the hind quarters of the sacrificial animals among all the participants of the sacrifices. The relatives are not allowed to go to work before three days have passed. The third day is called ka sngi lait.

The whole ceremony has symbolical meaning. The massive stone grave is supposed to represent a safe place for the spirits. If, however, the departed spirits are not satisfied with the whole ceremony, they will disturb their relatives in this world."